laser surgery based on latest Japanese/ Russian/American techniques;

(b) if so, the details in this regard alongwith the names of the Government Hospitals in Delhi and other major cities where these facilities are available;

(c) whether C.G.H.S. beneficiaries can also avail those facilities available in private eye clinics/hospitals in the country on Government expenditure;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D.K. THARADEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Mypoia is not curable but is corrected by spectacles and by a surgical technique namely Radial kortatotomy. This technique was popularised by Russian ophthalmologists. In this technique surgery on the cornea is done either by Diamond knife or Excimer laster.

(b) Radial Koratotomy is performed routinely in cases of myopia in Russia, USA and Japan. In India this technique is practised in Government Hospitals like Dr. R.P. Centre for Ophthalmic Services, AIIMS, Guru Nanak Eye Centre, Delhi. The facility is available in hispitals of major cities and with private practitioners in Bombay Madras, Calcutta, Indore, Hyderabad, Bangalore, etc.

(c) to (e). If this treatment is recommended by C.G.H.S. specialists the beneficiaries can avail the facility from Government recognised/referral hospital.

Regional Offices of U.G.C.

970. SHRIMATI MAHENDRA KUMARI:
SHRIMATI RITA VERMA:
PROF. UMMAREDDY BANDARU:
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up regional offices of the University Grants Commission;

(b) if so, location thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c). UGCA has taken a decision in principle, to set up its regional offices in different parts of the country. No decision on the location of these offices has been taken.

Quality of Condoms

971. SHRI TARA CHAND KHANDELWAL:
SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item Captioned "Indian Condoms of poor quality WHO" appearing in the Indian Express dated January 7, 1992;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to improve the quality of condoms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY

WELFARE (SHRIMATI D.K. THARADEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The present acceptance Quality/ Level as per Schedule 'R' of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945 is 1.5.

(c) The quality of the Condoms produced in the country conforms to the provisions laid down in Schedule 'R' of the Drugs & Cosmetic Rules. The Provisions of Schedule 'R' have been framed keeping in view the requirement of Condoms for use in the country.

[*Translation*]

Biosphere Reserves

972. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM:
SHRI RAJESH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of biosphere reserves in the country so far; and

(b) the extent to which the Genetics is being applied in conserving the biological and genetical diversities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY F ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) So far, seven Biosphere Reserves have been set up.

(b) Genetics is applied as an integral component of the various activities relating to surveys, conservation and multiplication of species.

[*English*]

Air Pollution in Cities

973. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE:
SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have identified the cities which are living under threat of large-scale toxic emissions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to reduce air pollution in those cities particularly in Chandigarh and New Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c). Government of India has identified 17 critically polluted areas in the country. These areas are: Pali (Rajasthan), Korba (Madhya Pradesh, Talcher (Orissa), Greater Cochin (Kerala), Gobindgarh (Punjab), Manali (Tamil Nadu), Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Vapi (Gujarat), Najafgarh (Delhi), Chembur (Maharashtra), Dhankes (Bihar), North Arcot (Tamil Nadu), Bhadrawati (Karnataka), Howrah (West Bengal), Digboi (Assam), Durgapur (West Bengal) and Singrauli (Uttar Pradesh). Air quality in 43 cities are being monitored. In Delhi as well as in Chandigarh the levels of sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen are well within the prescribed standards, Suspended particulate matter is, at times, on the higher side due to natural dusty conditions.

The steps taken by the Government to reduce pollution include the following:

(1) Emission standards have been prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(2) Ambient air quality standards have been evolved.

(3) A net work of ambient air quality